

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /016 W
----- 102311

P 031031Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8412

USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 6022

CU FOR RICHARDSON FROM AMBASSADOR; CU/WE STRAUS; CU/IAP

USIA FOR IEU/MCLAUGHLIN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OEXC, PO

SUBJECT: SPORTS PROGRAM PROPOSAL

REF: LISBON 5613, A-2455, 11 MAY

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY: COMMUNIST INFILTRATION AT ALL LEVELS OF PORTUGUESE SPORTS SECTOR IS OF DEEP CONCERN TO GOP. PRIME MINISTER SOARES HAS ASKED USG TO TAKE MAJOR INITIATIVE TO HELP GOP STEM COMMUNIST INFLUENCE. EMBASSY PROPOSES SEVERAL PROGRAMS FOR DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION.

1. CU'S PROGRAMMING FOR PORTUGAL LAST YEAR COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE ON TARGET OR PROFITABLE. OPERATING AS WE WERE UNDER A PRO-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT WE WERE DEPRIVED OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK, FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT, WITH MANY GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTES AND ORGANIZATIONS. WITH CU'S FINE BACKSTOPPING WE WERE ABLE TO DERIVE MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM AREAS WHERE WE HAD ENTREE AND COULD OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY.

2. THIS YEAR, FORTUNATELY, THE PICTURE HAS CHANGED AND IMPORTANT OPENINGS ARE COMING OUR WAY UNDER PORTUGAL'S
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FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN FIFTY YEARS, HEADED

BY PRIME MINISTER MARIO SOARES. ONE SUCH OPENING, WHICH WE GIVE OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY, IS IN THE FIELD OF SPORTS, AN AREA WHERE WE CANNOT AFFORD TO DO ANYTHING LESS THAN OUR VERY BEST. BACKGROUND THAT FOLLOWS GIVES, BRIEFLY, RATIONALE FOR PROGRAM REQUESTS LISTED BELOW. I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ATTENTION YOUR OFFICE CAN GIVE TO FULFILLING OUR PROPOSALS.

3. BACKGROUND: FOR PAST TWO YEARS POSITION OF PORTUGUESE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SPORTS AND YOUTH WAS FILLED BY A COMMUNIST WHO NOT ONLY WOULD NOT DEAL WITH US BUT EVEN WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO SABOTAGE ANY SPORTS ACTIVITY INVOLVING THE U.S. DURING HIS TENURE, NOT SURPRISINGLY, PORTUGAL SIGNED SPORTS PROTOCOLS (STILL VALID) WITH SIX COMMUNIST NATIONS WHO LOST NO TIME IN CAPITALIZING ON THE AGREEMENTS WITH VISITS OF SPORTING GROUPS AND OFFICIALS ALL UNDER THE AEGIS OF "FRATERNAL SOLIDARITY WITH PORTUGUESE ATHLETES." TO THE AVERAGE PORTUGUESE SPORTS ENTHUSIAST IT APPEARED THAT THE BLOC COUNTRIES WERE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PORTUGUESE YOUTH AND SPORTS WHEREAS THE U.S., BY ITS TOTAL ABSENCE, WAS NOT. THE EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS WERE--AND ARE-- UTILIZING ALL AVENUES TO MAKE POLITICAL GAINS VIA USE OF SPORTS. (USSR, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS JUST ANNOUNCED VERY ATTRACTIVE FIVE YEAR ALL-EXPENSE SCHOLARSHIPS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SOVIET UNION FOR YOUNG PORTUGUESE.

WHEN I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER MARIO SOARES RECENTLY HE BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF SPORTS, SAYING THAT THE INROADS MADE BY THE RUSSIANS AND THE BLOC NATIONS COULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED AND ASKED IF WE COULD MOUNT A SPORTS PROGRAM ASAP TO COUNTERACT THIS ALARMING SITUATION. YESTERDAY, THE NEW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS, DR. JOAQUIM BARROS DE SOUSA, WHO HAD SPECIFICALLY ASKED TO SEE ME, STATED THAT THE GOP WANTS TO TAKE FIRM, PROMPT AND VISIBLE ACTION TO UNDO PRESENT IMBALANCE BY SIGNING SPORTS PROTOCOLS WITH THE U.S. AND WEST GERMANY AND TO INITIATE EXCHANGE VISITS OF COACHES AND TEAMS IN SEVERAL SPORTS. I REPLIED THAT WE COULD PERHAPS ARRANGE SOMETHING IN THE LINE OF VISITS OF SPORTING

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TEAMS OR COACHES WITHOUT HAVING TO ENTER INTO ANY FORMAL AGREEMENT OR PROTOCOL. BARROS REPLIED EMPHATICALLY THAT UNLESS WE OBJECTED SERIOUSLY GOP WOULD STRONGLY URGE THE SIGNING OF A PROTOCOL SINCE THE ISSUE AT HAND "HAD JUST AS MUCH POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE GOP AS IT HAD CULTURAL OR SPORTING VALUE". I SAID THAT WHILE I COULD NOT GUARANTEE ANYTHING SPEAKING PERSONALLY I FELT SURE OUR GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO

SIGNING AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO COOPERATE IN THE SPORTS AND YOUTH SPHERES, ON PROGRAMS OF MUTUAL BENEFIT, PROVIDING TERMS WERE GENERAL, NOT SPECIFIC. BARROS DE SOUSA HAS ALREADY STARTED PROCESS TO RID HIS SECRETARIAT OF COMMUNISTS, AND IS MOST EAGER TO FORM EXTENSIVE LINKS WITH U.S. ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS. IN SEPTEL EMBASSY IS PROPOSING BARROS DE SOUSA FOR FY-77 IVP GRANT. END
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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /016 W

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P 031031Z SEP 76

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 6022

4. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: REQUESTS: BARROS DE SOUSA ASKED FOR OUR COOPERATION IN FIVE SPORTS: BASKETBALL, TENNIS, TRACK AND FIELD, SWIMMING, AND ROWING, AND ASKED SPECIFICALLY FOR VISITS BY COACHES OR TEAMS. CAN DEPARTMENT ARRANGE FOR VISITS, TO BEGIN ASAP, OF COACHES IN ABOVE SPORTS? WE REALIZE EXTREME DIFFICULTY IN SIGNING UP QUALIFIED PEOPLE ON SHORT NOTICE. HOWEVER, IT BEHOOVES US TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY AND INITIATE AT LEAST, ACTIVITY WITHOUT DELAY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT CIVILIAN BASKET BALL COACHES WITH U.S. FORCES IN GERMANY, HAVE BEEN HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN CLINICS SPONSORED BY USIS POSTS IN EUROPE. WOULD THIS BE A POSSIBILITY? BARROS DE SOUSA WOULD PLAN UTILIZING COACHES ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY AND EXPERIENCE--EITHER WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OR PROFESSIONAL TEAMS. ABILITY TO SPEAK PORTUGUESE IS NOT A NECESSITY. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT BARROS' DOMAIN IS NATIONWIDE, AND COVERS ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AS WELL AS PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

5. -- CAN THE DEPARTMENT SEND US SPORTS TEAMS WITH REGULAR FREQUENCY, SAY TWICE A MONTH? PERHAPS VISITS TO

PORTUGAL CAN BE COMBINED WITH STOPS IN SPAIN AND ITALY.
WE WOULD PLAN ON UTILIZING TEAM VISITS NOT ONLY FOR GAMES
BUT FOR EQUALLY IMPORTANT TRAINING AND DRILL SESSIONS ON
TECHNIQUES AS WELL. BASKETBALL TEAM WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT
START.

-- CAN THE DEPARTMENT SEND US "WORKING" SPORTS CELEBRITIES?
THE RAMIFICATIONS OF A VISIT BY SPORTS STARS WOULD BE FAR-
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REACHING. WE SUGGEST THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER SENDING
DECATHLON GOLD MEDAL WINNER BRUCE JENNER TO PORTUGAL FOR
TRACK AND FIELD WORKSHOPS. SINCE SOCCER IS PORTUGUESE
NATIONAL SPORT WE ALSO SUGGEST DEPARTMENT
CONSIDER POSSIBILITY ORGANIZING A EUROPEAN VISIT OF
SOCCER TEAM COMPRISED OF FAMOUS PLAYERS (PELE, EUSEBIO)
NOW IN NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE.

-- IN DEPARTMENT'S A-2455 OF 11 MAY THE CHICAGO SOCCER
ALL-STARS ARE SLATED, "TBA" FOR POLAND. IS THE GROUP
PROFESSIONAL? COULD IT MAKE LISBON STOPOVER?
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LISBON06022
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760334-1361
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760993/aaaadbyn.tel
Line Count: 195
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LISBON 5613
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <30 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPORTS PROGRAM PROPOSAL
TAGS: OEXC, PO
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006